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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/384,926	08/26/1999	FRANK D. D'AMELIO	CIR-990826	8498
22874	7590	04/29/2004	EXAMINER	
BRADLEY M GANZ, PC P O BOX 10105 PORTLAND, OR 97296			LEE, Y YOUNG	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2613	

DATE MAILED: 04/29/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/384,926

Applicant(s)

D'AMELIO ET AL.

Examiner

Y. Lee

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 21 April 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3, 16-18, 20-22, 24-26 and 35-102 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 24-26 and 35-102 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3, 16-18 and 20-22 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Claims 24-26 and 35-102 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a nonelected invention, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Applicant timely traversed the restriction (election) requirement in Paper No. 9.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 1-3, 16, 17, and 20-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Flagle (3,654,385) for the same reasons as set forth in Section 7 of the last office action, paper number 10, dated 1/21/04.
3. Claims 1-3, 16, 17, and 20-22 are also rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by Applicant's admitted prior art for the same reasons as set forth in Section 8 of the last office action, paper number 10, dated 1/21/04.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

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(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

6. Claim 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Flagle in view of Topper et al (5,157,497) for the same reasons as set forth in Section 10 of the last office action, paper number 10, dated 1/21/04.

7. Claim 18 is also rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's admitted prior art in view of Topper et al (5,157,497) for the same reasons as set forth in Section 11 of the last office action, paper number 10, dated 1/21/04.

Double Patenting

8. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

9. Claims 1-3, 16-18, and 20-22 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1 and 2 of U.S. Patent No. 6,100,920 for the same reasons as set forth in Section 13 of the last office action, paper number 10, dated 1/21/04

Response to Arguments

10. Applicant's arguments filed 4/21/04 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant asserts on pages 23-27 of the Remarks that Flagle fails to disclose an endoscope. However, the recitation endoscope has not been given patentable weight because the recitation occurs in the preamble. A preamble is generally not accorded any patentable weight where it merely recites the purpose of a process or the intended use of a structure, and where the body of the claim does not depend on the preamble for completeness but, instead, the process steps or structural limitations are able to stand alone. See *In re Hirao*, 535 F.2d 67, 190 USPQ 15 (CCPA 1976) and *Kropa v. Robie*, 187 F.2d 150, 152, 88 USPQ 478, 481 (CCPA 1951).

Applicant asserts on page 26 of the Remarks that Applicant's admitted prior art fails to disclose correcting differential picture brightness of an optical image due to uneven illumination. However, page 4 of applicant's own Specification explicitly discloses the concept of such well known differential picture brightness; whereas pages

4-7 of the Specification discloses various common solutions to uneven illumination from an optical instrument imaged onto a video tube or sensor.

After careful review of the file record, it has come to recognized that the previous office action inadvertently referred back to claims 8, 11-15, 31, and 33 in the parent application for rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103 over Flagle in view of Topper et al due to their similarity in claimed limitations and reasoning. It is clear as the last office action indicated that only claim 18 relied on the combination of Flagle in view of Topper et al. Therefore, the examiner wishes to clarify the above issue by separating claims into the followings:

(a) Claim 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Flagle in view of Topper et al; and

(b) Claim 18 is also rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Applicant's admitted prior art in view of Topper et al.

Since the above clarification was by itself evident in view of the last office action and the examiner maintain the same ground of rejection as previously set forth, it is believed that no hardship has been caused by the clarification. Nevertheless, the examiner wishes to apologize for the inadvertent oversight and any inconvenience to the applicant is regretted.

In response to applicant's argument on pages 27 and 28 of the Remarks that there is no suggestion to combine the references, the examiner recognizes that obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or

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motivation to do so found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. See *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988) and *In re Jones*, 958 F.2d 347, 21 USPQ2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, even if the suggestion for combination is not particularly specified in either Flagle or Applicant's admitted prior art, (or even Topper et al), the question in the test for combining references in a section 103 rejection is not solely relied on what the individual reference expressly teaches. In *re McLaughlin*, 170 USPQ 209-213:

"It should be too well settled now to require citation or discussion that the test for combining references is not what the individual references themselves suggest but rather what the combination of disclosures taken as a whole would suggest to one of ordinary skill in the art. Any judgment on obviousness is in a sense necessarily a reconstruction based upon hindsight reasoning, but so long as it takes into account only knowledge which was within the level of ordinary skill at the time the claimed invention was made and does not include knowledge gleaned only from applicant's disclosure, such a reconstruction is proper."

Therefore, even though neither Flagle nor Applicant's admitted prior art taken singularly or Topper et al for claim 18 suggests the combination as claimed, the combination of Flagle or Applicant's admitted prior art and further with Topper et al taken as a whole would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art as previously set forth in the last office action.

Applicant asserts on pages 28 and 29 of the Remarks that Examiner did not provide the required analysis in the double patenting rejection. However, as stated in the last office action, claims 1-3, 16-18, and 20-22 of the present application are

broader and encompassing of the patented claims in the parent patent. See 214
U.S.P.Q. 761 In re Van Ornum and Stanz.

Conclusion


11. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Y. Lee whose telephone number is (703) 308-7584. The examiner can normally be reached on (703) 308-7584.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Chris Kelley can be reached on (703) 305-4856. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Y. Lee
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 2613

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